

## **Family Illness & Emergencies**

Revised 8/1/22

### **Overview:**

When an institution receives information regarding an emergency including, but not limited to, an inmate's close family member's critical illness or death of a close family member, institution staff shall verify the information's accuracy; A close family member means the inmate's spouse, children, grandparents, grandchildren, siblings, or natural, adoptive, step, and foster parents. If this information is found to be accurate, a special emergency phone call may be allowed to the inmate's family and institution staff shall inform the inmate's social worker, assigned psychologist, unit sergeant, chaplain, and/or security supervisors.

Please review your institution specific procedures for information regarding your institution's emergency phone call process and the set time limits for such a call.

If the inmate requests a funeral, death bed or memorial visitation, in response to learning of the death, or significant illness, of their family member, refer to the [Funeral and Death Bed Visits](#) ECRM section.

### **Social Worker/Treatment Specialist/Designee Responsibilities:**

Upon receiving information of an inmate's close family member's critical illness or death, the social worker shall verify the accuracy of this information through contacting a relevant hospital, police department, funeral home, hospice, and/or coroner. Once the family member's critical illness or death has been verified, Social Workers may inform the inmate of the information regarding the death of a family member, and/or provide the inmate with a special emergency phone call to family, when they are in work status. Social Workers shall relay pertinent information regarding this situation to unit staff, assigned psychologist, chaplain, and security supervisors upon completion of an emergency phone call. Social Workers shall also document all pertinent information in a COMPAS note. Depending on facility procedure, the DOC-0831 shall be completed and routed to appropriate institution staff in the event of an emergency phone call.

### **Resources/References:**

DOC 309.41 Incoming and emergency calls

DOC 309.43 Procedure for approval

DOC 309.02 Definitions (4) "Close family member"

DAI 309.00.08 Death Bed and Memorial Visitation within a Facility

DOC-0831 Emergency Telephone Call Report

**Family Illness & Emergencies** [Back to Top](#)

The institution receives information regarding the death of a family member and verifies its accuracy. The inmate's social worker, assigned psychologist, unit sergeant, chaplain, and security supervisors are informed. An emergency phone call to family can be allowed at this time.

**Social Worker/Treatment Specialist Responsibilities:**

Upon receiving information that an inmate's family member has passed away, social worker should ask for information to verify accuracy – hospital, police department, funeral home, and/or coroner. Social Workers are expected to inform inmates of information regarding the death of a family member when they are in work status. Social Workers should relay pertinent information to unit staff, assigned psychologist, chaplain, and security supervisors upon completion of phone call. Social Workers should also document all pertinent information in a COMPAS note. Dependent on facility procedure, the DOC-0831 shall be completed and routed to appropriate institution staff in the event of an emergency phone call.

DOC 309.41 Incoming and emergency calls.

*(1) Because of the difficulty of reaching inmates for incoming calls, a person calling an inmate should be asked to leave a message. The message shall be delivered to the inmate as soon as possible.*

*(2) In the case of emergencies, including but not limited to critical illness or death of a close family member of an inmate, a special telephone call may be permitted regardless of the security status of the inmate or the number of calls already made during that month.*

DOC 309.43 Procedure for approval.

*(1) Each institution shall make a written policy available to inmates that contains a specific procedure for requesting telephone calls and that sets time limits for the calls. The procedure shall be consistent with this chapter.*

*(2) The warden may make exceptions to any limits on inmate calls consistent with the policy of this chapter.*

DOC 309.02 Definitions.

(4) "Close family member" under ss. DOC 309.08 and 309.41 to 309.49 means the inmate's natural, adoptive, step, and foster parents; spouse, children, grandparents, grandchildren, or siblings. A parent surrogate is within the definition of parent if an inmate substantiates that a claimed surrogate did in fact act as a parent to the inmate, although the parent surrogate was not an adoptive, foster, or stepparent.